

Dr. Widtsoe emphasized a year ago at our conference the important part which the rural people of America play in the safety and security of this great land. Certainly no group of people in all the world know so well that, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." And as Brother Widtsoe said in that excellent address, which I commend to you, "A strong rural membership brings safety to the Church, not otherwise obtainable. It is so in the nation."

The principles of self-help are economically, socially, and spiritually sound. The Lord will not do for us what we can and should do for ourselves. But it is his purpose to take care of his Saints. Everything that concerns the economic, social, and spiritual welfare of the human family is and ever will be the concern of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

May the Lord bless us with inspiration to guide us in all of our material affairs that we might be successful. And may we ever keep in mind the great objective of life and the purposes of God in establishing us here in the earth, namely, to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life in the celestial kingdom, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The ladies of the Tabernacle Choir sang "O Divine Redeemer," by Gounod.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

My brothers and sisters, I trust that the few moments that I stand before you, I may have an interest in your faith and prayers, that what I say may be helpful, at least to some of us.

The wide range of subjects which have been talked about at this conference shows the scope of the gospel of Jesus Christ and shows us how in that gospel and in the gospel plan the Lord has provided for all of our needs. There is no phase of life, that we have to live, that is not fully covered by the principles of the gospel.

CONFIDENCE EXPRESSED IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

As has been repeatedly observed, and I myself have mentioned, we are beginning a new era in the history of the Church. We have had great leaders in the past: President Smith, President Young, President Taylor, President Woodruff, President Snow, President Smith, President Grant, and now President George Albert Smith. Each of those brethren in the past had the love, confidence, and respect of every Latter-day Saint who was living as he should live. Those only have spoken ill who were not serving the Lord. As in the past, so it is today.

May I say, we miss today and through this conference, not only the presence, but the admonitions of President Grant—a great man, so esteemed by all who knew him in the Church and out, a man of

steadfast principle, a man who lived as he preached, a man who knew no guile, a man who was honest and truthful, a man respected and loved, to whom I gave all the loyalty I had. The world will not soon forget President Grant.

Now we come to President Smith, and again I say that to him I give all of the loyalty, all the respect, and I shall give to him all the love that I gave to President Grant. If I did not do so, I would not be worthy of the choice he has made. May God help me to do my duty.

CONTINUAL INSPIRATION NECESSARY TO GROWTH OF CHURCH

Brother Stephen L Richards yesterday said a few words, along with others, in connection with the growth of this Church. There has been a marvelous growth. You will remember that after the Savior died, Paul tells us some five hundred assembled together and he appeared before them. We may assume, I think, that that number was more or less the total of the congregation he had been able to bring together. A few days after Pentecost, Peter, preaching in the temple, talked to five thousand, many of whom seemed to be believers. But the growth of the church from then on, while great, seems not ever to have approached our growth in the matter of numbers. I dimly remember having read somewhere, that there were perhaps a hundred thousand members at the end of the first hundred years. We number almost a million. That one hundred thousand, or whatever number it was, went forward, but the records show that after the apostolic age, after the apostles died, people began to wander away from the truth. Some writers affirm that inspiration ceased. Perhaps that is why they did not grow more rapidly and certainly we have grown so rapidly because inspiration and revelation, of which Brother Widtsoe spoke, have continued with us during all these years. But even during the time of the apostles there began to be a falling away, as is clear from the Epistles of Paul, of Peter, John, James, and Jude. People began to wander off, and that wandering was increased in the succeeding centuries, accumulating speed, it seems, as it went on.

They began to gather into church teachings things to make Christianity a little more palatable to the philosophers of the time. They brought in something of Plato's doctrines, something from the philosophies of the Orient, they brought in dualism, and they mixed up with it a little Christianity and in reaction created the cult and the beliefs known as Montanism. Imperceptibly they went away. Why did they go? Because they were trying to satisfy the thought and the philosophy and the reasoning of men, in order that they might have their support and probably their praise. Thus came Gnosticism. Montanism was an attempted return to the early principles of the gospel. Out of the two, with other doctrines of philosophy and thought which came in, were developed the Christian beliefs and practices that were finally established with headquarters at Rome.

WARNING AGAINST CHANGES IN ESTABLISHED ORDER OF CHURCH

There is a deep lesson in all of that for us today. Already there are coming in amongst us doctrines that have no part or place in the pure doctrines of the restored gospel. These heresies are creeping in insidiously. They come to us from the philosophies of men, in no small part from the philosophies of the Christian scholars of the day. They make our doctrines, as they made the early Christian beliefs, more palatable to our philosophers, but so surely as they destroyed the Christian church in the early days, just so surely will they destroy us if we do not stop them where they are.

It is easy to see, too, how the early Christian church got away from the simple practices that the Lord established and that his apostles followed with.

I want to say a word particularly to you brethren and sisters who come from long distances, you who are in the outlying areas of the Church, surrounded as you are by the mass of the people who do not believe as you believe; you are subject to their influences, their social contacts, their habits, and their customs. You find inevitably that they try to lead you away, and you, being human, must struggle not to be led. Preserve, I say to you, brethren and sisters, the simplicity of our rites, few as they are, and our ceremonies. Do not begin to introduce elaborate dress and pageantry in connection with the administration of the sacrament. I would amaze you if I should tell you how far it is reported some have gone.

Please do not say to us: "You do not understand, you are up here, and we are away in these great, metropolitan areas, and you do not know our problems." Well, some of us do. Some of us have lived in great metropolitan areas. There is no area in which, for example, the sacrament may not be simply administered. Yours is not a peculiar situation, unknown.

Again: you do sometimes have long distances to go to reach your meetings, but so have the people in many, many rural areas in this state, the state to the south, and the state to the north. They get along, and so can you. Do not try to get into the position where you can get through with all of your worship in a couple of hours on Sunday morning. Do not do that. The point I hope you are getting is: do not try to change the established order of the Church to suit what seems to you to be a peculiar situation of your own. You are not dissimilar, you are the same, and if you change and someone else changes to suit his convenience and his peculiar situation, and then someone else, somewhere else, and so on, we shall come to a time when our unity not only of observance, but of faith, will cease.

I plead with you, my brethren and sisters, hold fast to the iron rod.

You will never make a mistake by following the instructions and the counsel of him who stands at the head as God's mouthpiece on earth.

May the Lord give us faith and strength, may he give us determination, may we be valiant, may we have courage, may we live always simply, may we worship God in our hearts, not merely ceremony; may we be in truth his people, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

President J. Reuben Clark, of the First Presidency of the Church, has just spoken to you and it now falls to my lot as your presiding officer to say a few closing words as we finish this conference.

Nobody could stand where I am and look into the eager, upturned faces of a congregation such as this and not be impressed with the responsibility that attaches to counseling and advising such a remarkable group of people.

BLESSINGS ENJOYED BY THE SAINTS

The world is in a ferment. The conditions of the world in many places are anything but desirable, and yet we are permitted to meet together today, in peace, in this glorious weather, on this block that is so delightfully beautified. We are permitted to live here in the fresh air of these grand valleys and mountains, unafraid of any impending danger. What a grateful people we ought to be! When I think of the comforts and the blessings and opportunities, that have come into my life, because my forebears accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ and went through all kinds of undesirable and uncomfortable experiences in order that they might be permitted to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, I am most grateful to my Heavenly Father.

No other country in the world is as blessed as this country. The Lord himself raised up the men to prepare the Constitution under which we live. Free opportunity to serve God, untrammled, has been vouchsafed to us by that Constitution, and the people of the United States of America, who have continued to honor God and keep his commandments, have retained an understanding of the purpose of life and a faith that is worth more than all of the wealth of the world.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

We in this Church, are only a handful of people. There are many churches in the world, many in the United States, which bear the names of the men who organized them, such as the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and others. Great and good men have come forward and sought to improve the conditions of the people, and the country in which they lived. We have the peculiar distinction of belonging to a Church that does not have the name of any man, because it was not organized by the wisdom of any man. It was named by the Father of us all in honor of his Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.